

SALT LAKE VALLEY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
RAT PROOFING YOUR HOME

This brochure will provide you with information that you can use to protect your property against rat infestation.

Rat Facts:

- Rats can gain access through ½ inch hole. They climb both horizontal and vertical wires.
- They can climb inside of vertical pipes and conduits 3 inches in diameter.
- They can climb bricks or other rough exterior walls offering foot holds.
- They climb vines, shrubs or trees to gain access to upper stories of buildings.
- They can travel in sewer lines, even against a substantial current, and dive through water plumbing traps.
- They travel approximately 300 feet to obtain food, water, and shelter.

Preventative Measures:

- Store all household garbage in a garbage can with a tight fitting lid.
- Pile lumber, firewood, and other outside storage items at least 18 inches above ground. The common rats of this area nest underground beneath objects. Be aware that decks provide excellent rodent harborage.
- Store all animal feed and human food stuffs in rodent proof containers.
- Close all openings of your home, garage, and storage sheds to prevent rats from gaining access.
- Trim lower limbs and shrubs up 18 inches.
- Salt Lake Valley Health Department Regulations require the removal and proper disposal of all trash, refuse, inoperable vehicles, and fallen fruit from your property. This will also discourage rats from living on your property.

Inside your home look for and seal up all gaps and holes that are greater than or equal to ½ inch:

- Underneath, behind, and inside kitchen cabinets
- Inside closets
- Around floor air vents
- Around dryer vents
- Around fireplaces
- Around windows and doors
- Behind appliances such as dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, and stoves
- Around pipes under kitchen and bathroom sinks

- Around all electrical, water, gas, and sewer lines
- Beneath or behind hot water heaters, radiators, and furnaces and around their pipes that enter the home.

Outside your home look for and seal up:

- All gaps and holes around windows and doors
- Between the foundation of the home and the ground
- Under doors without weather stripping
- Around electrical, cable, water, gas and sewer lines
- Around the roof, eaves, gables, and soffits
- Unscreened attic vents and crawlspace vents

Special consideration for **Mobile Homes**, seal up holes and gaps:

- In the skirting and trim
- Between the trim and metal siding
- Around utility lines, pipes, and ducts
- Around roof vents
- Around the trailer tongue

Below are guidelines and suggestions to help **reduce the rat population** on your property.

Traps:

Rats can be trapped, however, they easily become “trap shy”; they avoid new things in their environment and they learn quickly to avoid traps.

However, if you choose to use a trap, they can be baited with peanut butter, bacon, rolled oats, etc. Place the trap where you have seen or suspect the rat runs, put the bait pan next to and at a right angle to the wall, so the rat will come into contact with the “trigger” even though it is not after the bait, this will improve the trapping success. Many traps will kill the rat, if not, it will be your responsibility to do so.

Poisoning:

Poisoning rats is a very effective way to reduce the rat population in your area. All poisoning must be conducted legally, with care and according to the recommendations on the poison label and inserts. It is suggested that all baits be placed in a tamper-proof “bait box” which allows entry by rats, but not cats, dogs, wild birds, or children. The bait

boxes should be firmly attached to a wall or the ground to prevent accidental spillage of the bait. There are many legal rat poisons available on the market; however, the best bait is the one that rats will eat. Don't hesitate to change baits. Poisons are attainable through Farm Supply stores. Look under "Farm Supplies" in the yellow pages for a listing of these stores.

(If your dog eats a poisoned rat, it may make the dog sick. Just biting into it is not likely to cause a problem, but contact your veterinarian for more information).

Sealing Holes in Your Home:

Cement, lath screen, lath metal, wire screening, (make sure you don't seal openings needed for ventilation, cover with hardware cloth <1/2 inch grate size) or steel wool may be used to patch holes. Caulk must be administered when using steel wool to prevent the rat from pushing the material through the hole. Caulk or expanding foam can be used to reinforce any repairs where lath metal and hardware cloth are the primary materials. Caulk or expanding foam used alone are usually not sufficient to prevent rat intrusion.

If rat burrows are found under the foundation or trailer skirting, construct a barrier around the foundation using 14 inch wide, greater than or equal to 1/2 inch mesh, 16 – 19 gauge hardware cloth. Bend the hardware cloth lengthwise into a right angle with two sides of approximately 7 inches. Secure one side of the hardware cloth tightly to the building side. The other side should be buried at least 2 inches below ground level and extend from the wall.

Disposal:

Do NOT pick up a dead rat with your hands!! Use a shovel or other tool to pick up the dead rat and place in a plastic bag, tie tightly, double bag, and deposit it in your garbage can for routine pick up.